



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

April 14, 2005

News Release

ICE SHARES \$430,900 IN DRUG ASSETS WITH PLATTSBURGH POLICE *Immigration and Customs Enforcement credits Police with critical help in drug cases*

Plattsburgh, New York—Officials from Immigration and Customs Enforcement today presented a check for \$430,909.08 to Plattsburgh Police Chief Desmond Racicot for the department's assistance in cracking a number of drug smuggling cases. The money is part of the proceeds seized during the investigation of illegal narcotics activity along the Canadian border north of Plattsburgh.

Resident Agent in Charge Michael Bridgeman said that the department has dedicated a city detective to the local ICE office and supported ongoing narcotics smuggling investigations as part of a federal, local partnership.

Bridgeman said that the forfeited money comes from five drug cases that are all at various stages of investigation and prosecution. All of the cases involve narcotics or money that was smuggled into the United States.

"Having a Plattsburgh officer working with our federal agents brings invaluable expertise about local illegal activity and the community," Bridgeman stated. The Plattsburgh detective also acts as a liaison between the department and ICE. Bridgeman said that smugglers moving through a community tend to use local facilities and have contact with local criminals. "Having a Plattsburgh detective working with ICE full-time gives us immediate information and insight into suspicious activity at a local level."

In accepting the Asset Forfeiture funds, Plattsburgh Police Chief Desmond Racicot said that the proceeds would be used to fight crime in the community and to continue assisting state and federal agencies along the border.

"Plattsburgh sits squarely on a major smuggling route into the United States," the Chief commented, "and it is the community's best interest to help keep drugs out of our schools and off our streets. By working with ICE and Homeland Security at the local level we also help stop smuggling into the interior of the country," The Chief concluded.

ICE's Asset Forfeiture Program, initiated under the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984, provides funding to state and local law enforcement agencies that participate in ICE investigations that lead to seizures and forfeitures. The law allows the government to take illegal profits from crimes such as narcotics smuggling, money laundering, and fraud.

Bridgeman pointed out that the seizures allow the government to turn the table on the criminal organizations by using their own profits to enhance local enforcement efforts. "Anytime law enforcement can use illegal profits against the bad guys, the entire community benefits. Narcotics smugglers," Bridgeman stated "are a threat to our national security and public safety in big cities and rural America alike."

Besides working with local law enforcement Bridgeman pointed out that ICE needs assistance from the general public in the border area. People can report suspicious activity by calling the DHS nationwide tip line at 1 866 DHS-2ICE. Trained law enforcement personnel answer the tip line 24 hours a day 365 days a year. Information gathered at the tip line is forwarded to ICE field offices around the nation.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.